

Good morning all, Ey Swayel.

It's September 28th and I just wanted to provide an update this week on really three things. The significance of September 30th in terms of the year and the count of students, I want to give you an update on COVID and I want to talk about blended learning and where we are.

First and foremost, I want to talk to you about September 30th which is an incredibly important date for the school district and all districts in BC. This is when we solidify our count of students who are coming into the school year and it sets the funding for the year. So I want to give a huge shout out and thank you to all teachers, support staff, school administrators and our district staff who have made every effort they can to make sure that we have as many kids as possible attached to their neighborhood school and we're ready to get rolling for the year. Once September 30th passes, it really is the year and is rolling full ahead. So thank you for that.

The next part is on COVID. A couple key pieces, and I know I've said this before, but I want to walk through the protocol again and talk about "when does the school get an exposure letter" and "when would you not get an exposure letter". So once again the protocol is: a case is confirmed by the Health Authority, they are the one to tell us there is a positive case at a school, and the key question is: was the person infectious when they were at school, or were they not. So if there is a case linked to a school community, let's say it's a person who works with a school or a student who goes to school and they were never at the school when they were infectious, there is no exposure letter. There's no reason to say to the school, hey there was a non event at your school. So you will hear potentially a rumor in your school about hey so and so got tested for Covid and they're positive and if you don't hear about it from the school it means there never was an exposure at the school as confirmed by health. So that's super important. The other part then of course is, as you know, if it is yes, then we send an exposure letter to the staff and to the entire school community. So anytime there is an exposure, as determined by health in the school, we send out a letter. Then there really are a key set of interviews that take place around the interview of the person who is positive, and they find out who the close contacts are. Those contacts who are low risk, that may have been someone exposed, would get a letter to monitor their symptoms. And then there is a higher risk contacts, those which might be the people who were close to a person who is positive, they would get direct personal contact by health, and they would be asked to be put in self isolation for 14 days. So those are really the two different types of letters. There is a whole school exposure letter, and then there is a self monitoring letter for those who are lower risk, and for higher risk you'll be asked to self isolate. But for the rest of the school we monitor the whole school for 14 days and then at the end of 14 days we know that incubation period has passed, that school comes off of our watch list. I've developed a little flowchart and I'll put that out on social media so that people can see it as well. It's really important, particularly, when the rumor mill gets going and someone hears there's a case attached to a school, the most important thing is, was that person infectious while they were at school? If they were not infectious, there is no exposure, there is no letter.

The last part for today is really around blended learning. I just want to give an enormous thank you to all that have been involved. We have structures in kindergarten through grade nine. Giving students the opportunity for Surrey blended in elementary, some opportunities for more online in grade eight and nine and all students in grades 10 to 12 are on a blended learning program. That means for Surrey as a district, we have about 29,000 students on blended learning this fall. It's something that many teachers, most teachers, will not have done before. It requires new instructional methods for them, new things for them to learn, new things for them to try and to do, and we know with that opportunity also comes challenges. This is a lot of work

for people to get their heads around and I just want to acknowledge the expertise and professionalism that everyone brings to that table in terms of helping our Surrey Blended program be the program that it needs to be and help us with transition because there are a number of students out there that we want to keep attached to our school. We know school is the best place for kids, we want them in school, we want them with their teacher and that's the way we hope to move forward.

So I just wanted to update those three things and as always say thank you to everyone for all that you're doing during these challenging times. I'm really happy to get to September 30th and the count behind us and look forward to the year ahead.

Take care, stay well, Hy'ce:pka.